

*Where were they?*

Vacant hopped from place to place, portal to portal, warping space into short spurts to ease his searching. It needed the time mentor to further its goals... But where?

Unlike most skireans he didn't have the luxury of simply *asking* where someone was, considering he was wanted for more... unsavory crimes. Crimes that get you wanted posters on the street and yelled at if you enter a public place. So, it had to search manually from gossip and conversations it heard over the course of a week.

But it wasn't so bad, not as difficult as it sounded... The time mentor Howwer wasn't nearly as reclusive as the faceless guide, and was seen often around Skire. The real question was, where were their current whereabouts? As far as Vacant knew, they had a few different domiciles for various hobbies and projects and research escapades around Skire, which made pinpointing their current location tedious and difficult. Likewise, for all Vacant knew, they could be travelling in between locations or simply just out and about in a town.

It jumped through a few more warped portals, checking various cluttered residences, before coming upon its final destination.

As he exited the portal, it stepped on a pile of loose books and paper, sliding and falling to the ground with a loud *thud*. Howwer jumped at the sudden sound, pulling them out of their focus on a small object they were tinkering on. They quickly turned around to the sudden intrusion, but instead of being mad, a warm smile grew on their face.

"Oh! Hello, I wasn't expecting visitors today." They said, stepping over to Vacant and offering a hand to help them up. Vacant stared a little reluctantly, before accepting and standing up.

"What brings you here?" Howwer asked.

"Magic training." Vacant spoke, voice quiet and monotone. "Time, specifically, and as far as I know you're the only one with the capabilities to train another in it."

Howwer chuckled. "Well, I don't know about that, but I'll take that as a compliment. I'd be happy to teach you what I know, but first can I get your name?" They asked.

Vacant was quiet for a moment, before speaking up. "...Vacant."

"What was that? Sorry I didn't quite hear you." They tilted their head, ears held high.

"Vacant." It said a little louder.

"Oh! Bit of an unusual name but it is a pleasure to meet you Vacant! I'm Howwer, as you've probably already heard." They held out a hand. Vacant took it and shook it.

Thankfully it didn't seem like the time mentor was aware of Vacant's history at all, otherwise that would've made things... difficult... Vacant would have to make sure others didn't catch on to it being here.

"Nice to meet you as well... This isn't my first time learning magic, but I am willing to learn whatever teaching style you do." Vac gave a nod.

"I see! Splendid then, so that's less of the basics I'll have to cover. I have a few different ways I teach, but I am willing to adapt to whatever ways you already know." They turned, continuing to explain while they walked over to a shelf, grabbing a book. "Generally I start with reading, theory, and lecture before moving onto practical well, practice and other sorts of hands-on things. Time to put it simply is a far more complicated form of magic, and much less forgiving when it comes to errors, so it is imperative that one understands it well before messing with it."

"Makes sense... and I understand that. The previous field of magic I learned was similar." Vacant responded.

"Oh? What type was it, if you don't mind me asking?" Howwer perked up, curious as ever.

"Space."

"Ahh! Sounds like you're wishing to learn to master reality itself haha!" Howwer joked, but that was Vacant's goal.